

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

**Pale Mottled Willow *Paradrina clavipalpis* (Scopoli) larva on *Salix caprea*.** – On 17.vii.2005, while surveying Goat willow bushes *Salix caprea* L. for lepidopterous larvae in woodland north-east of Winchester, North Hampshire VC12 (SU5234), I found a leaf whose edges had been curled towards its lower surface and tightly secured with silk, and which on teasing apart revealed a small to medium-sized, grey-brown larva. I brought the leaf home where the larva pupated. The moth emerged on 13.ix.2005 and proved to be *Paradrina clavipalpis* (Scopoli) (Noctuidae). The tetrad record supplements those in Goater & Norriss (2001), on Butterfly Conservation's *Hants Moths* website <<http://www.bike2nature.co.uk/index.html>>, and accessible via the National Biodiversity Network Gateway (2004) <<http://www.searchnbn.net/>>.

The species is nationally common and the absence of records locally almost certainly reflects a scarcity of recording effort: *Paradrina clavipalpis* records received by Goater & Norriss (2001) from 10km square SU53 included only one, adjacent tetrad.

The principal food of *P. clavipalpis* larvae is seeds, mainly of grasses including growing and harvested cereal grains, and of plantains *Plantago* spp. and Garden pea *Pisum sativum* L. (Waring & Townsend, 2003). However it is known to also feed on plantain foliage and to accept dandelion leaves *Taraxacum* spp. in captivity (Porter, 1997), and indeed probably feeds on a variety of vegetable matter (Skinner, 1998). Yet its use of *S. caprea* as a larval host-plant appears to be hitherto undocumented. Given the wide UK distribution and abundance of both *P. clavipalpis* and *S. caprea*, and that across British Lepidoptera common willow (specifically *S. cinerea* L.) is the most widely exploited UK host-plant after English oak *Quercus robur* L. and Silver Birch *Betula pendula* Rothschild (Southwood *et al.*, 1982), the extent to which the moth utilises this shrub warrants further investigation. It may be much greater than writings suggest.

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